

/28 cont'd/

386 designs are completed the cloth is dyed. This is a very difficult
286 craft; if it is not skillfully done, the wax design may be broken.
Thus skill and concentration are the two requirements of this craft.
After the dyeing is completed, they wash the cloth with clean water,
and after this set it out in a sun-drenched open area to dry, in order
to remove the wax. When the wax is completely cleaned away, the
process is completed." (See the Chinese translation of Miao Tsu
Tiao-ch'a Pao-kao /Report on an Investigation of the Miao People/,
p. 267.)

285 Miao women still use bags made of hemp fiber. When they
482 go out, they carry them on their backs; all their miscellaneous
445 possessions are packed in them. They resemble the Cantonese
women who carry babies on their backs.

7. Trade

437 Because their productivity is slight and their products are very
438 similar, there is almost no trade, not even barter, among the Miao
themselves. Though they carry on some trade with the Li, their
439 commercial relations have not gone beyond the barter stage, such
as the exchange of bamboo products for rice mentioned above.
Truly complex trade is only carried on with the Chinese, and it is
only a start. This is of several types. First, there are the Chinese
peddlers who bring goods to sell in the Miao villages and, at the
same time, buy the local products from the Miao. Second, the
[443] Miao occasionally /29/ go to the Li markets to do business with the
Chinese merchants. In the capital of Pao-t'ing district and in the
Wen-hua market of Ta-ch'i under the jurisdiction of the district,
one frequently sees traces of the Miao people of the vicinity. Third,
they go to more distant Chinese markets to buy and sell. But this
is done at no set times; only when they lack some necessity do
they go. The Miao live deep in the mountains; these Chinese
markets are all equally distant. A few are several tens of li away
but many are a hundred li away. Since the Miao all live a simple
life in which few things are really needed, the occasions when they
come out to a Chinese market to trade are rare, once or twice a
month at the most.

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business sense he had now accumulated a considerable amount of property. At Mr. Li's invitation, we went with him to Wen-hua market. This trading center was built only a few years ago, and now it had two streets and several ten's of thatched houses. The traders mostly were natives of the three districts of Wan-ning, Ling-shui, and Lo-hui. The place appeared deserted. In the middle of the trading center was an elementary school, but as it was now winter vacation, we did not have a chance to inspect it.

437 Just then a Miao arrived at the trading center, bringing rice for barter. We bartered two package of tobacco, a tin tablespoon, and some needles for three sheng of rice (24 liang in a pint). Actually, when we began our reckoning, the value of his goods was greater than that of ours, but he was completely satisfied /129/ for he apparently thought that he had gotten a good bargain. This also brings to light the condition of disparity in value, under which the bartering trade has been carried on between Chinese merchants and the Li and the Miao people.

796 At ten o'clock that evening, just as we were ready to go to bed, we suddenly heard the sound of gongs and drums approaching. On inquiring of the workmen of the Wang family, we learned that in the neighboring village the family of a sick man was putting on a t'iao
755 niang /"leaping women"/ service. This was something we did not
796 want to miss, so we went in the dark to watch it. We did not know how far away it was, and all we could do was to go in the direction from which the sound of gongs and drums was coming. On the way we woke up the dogs in the village, and the sounds of barking began everywhere. When we reached the gates of the village, we saw
[201] under the moonlight a cordon of leaves at the entrance, which, according to Li custom, is a sign forbidding outsiders from entering the village. But since we had come such a long distance, we pretended not to see it and went ahead. When we reached the sick man's home, the t'iao niang had just begun. The three or four niang p'o /"old women"/ were all males. In the house hung five bronze gongs and a large drum, and with the disorderly striking of the former and thumping of the latter, a great confusion of noise was created. The

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787 general omens and those of the oracle. The oracle with the pair of chickens is used not only in connection with the birth of a child, but also on other occasions, and it has the advantage that from the combination of its omens one can see not only the good and the bad aspects, but also to what extent human beings will be able to intervene and avert evil.

[125] The greatest importance is ascribed to oracles. The belief in the reliability of omens and oracles is so /193/ extensive that the Meau literally do not undertake anything without consulting the spirits and immediately give up any plan in case of an unfavorable answer. When I asked a female shaman to draw something for me on the sheet of paper that I provided for my psychological investigations, she laid out an oracle to learn from her teacher-spirit whether and what she should draw! Only then did she take my sheet of paper and draw.

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787 Once every year some Chinese traders (see the chapter, "Trade") visit the remote and widely scattered Meau villages in order to do business by selling goods that they bring along and by buying various products of the Meau. On these occasions it not infrequently happens that all the trouble and expense on the part of the traders has been in vain, even though the Meau for their part would have been happy to do business with them. Before any trading, however, the oracle is invariably consulted, for no Meau is going to sell pigs or opium or buy silver without first consulting the spirits. If the oracle predicts an unfavorable outcome, the Chinese trader has no choice but to leave the village without having transacted any business; his long and arduous journey with porters was in vain, for he can do nothing to induce the Meau to change their minds.

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[787] Even I had to submit to the verdict of the oracle, if I could not find a convincing way out. For example, Chief Tsin Tsai, whose son Lü had regained his health through my plasmochin-atabrine treatment after the conjuration, had put me under his special protection out of gratitude. Tsin Tsai was an excellent and passionate hunter. When I noticed that he was annoyed by our constant questioning or our requests for food, I proposed to [320] him, the best gunsmith for miles around, by the way, that we

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/208 cont. /

769 As has already been described in detail in the pertinent
 782 sections of the chapter, "Life in the Community," sacrifices
 [852] are offered to the ancestors on the third day after the birth of a
 [764] child, in connection with the conclusion of a marriage, and
 at the burial of a human being. When it is a matter of the
 death of the head of a family, his chief wife, together with the
 oldest son of the deceased, offers a sacrifice.

The Meau is not satisfied, however, with the sacrifices
 mentioned, for the ancestors play an important role in all the
 details of his everyday life. For example, the spirits are in-
 formed of any change in the number of the livestock of the
 household, since whenever anyone sacrifices an animal, he does
 not fail to let some blood drip upon sacral paper and in burning
 this, calls upon the ancestors to enjoy themselves as well. If
 [437] an animal is sold alive, one sacrifices an appropriate amount of
 spirit-money to the ancestors, informs them of the sale, and
 thanks them for their help in letting the animal become large
 and strong. Even if one only sells a little pig, he remembers
 the ancestors and thanks them for letting the sow become so
 great with young and bring so many young into the world.

484 Sacrifices are made not only before decisive events, but
 782 also before beginning any kind of work or prior to a journey. I
 [461] was able to take part in one such sacrifice. The brother-in-law
 of Chief Tsin Tsai had come for a visit and now intended to
 return to his village. The chief decided to sacrifice a pig in
 order to make sure that his relative would have a safe trip. The
 sacrifice was offered to the high Father-Mother spirit, and
 accordingly the bench that otherwise stood in front of the altar
 within the house was set up in front of the house. The fettered
 live pig was put on it in such a way /209/ that its snout projected
 beyond it. On the ground under it spirit-money in the value of
 the pig was burned, and through this it was "bought" from the
 spirits (III. 103).¹ The bench was then cleared, and on it the
 chief placed bowls of tea and incense candles and added six
 pieces of spirit-money, each having the spirit-value of 25 pieces
 of silver. Next he picked up the oracle horns and asked the
 [787] spirits whether his brother-in-law would have a safe journey home.

¹ [see cat 116, P704- ANALYST]

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439 has already been mentioned, obtain iron, metal pots and pans, flints, matches, sulphur needed for the making of gunpowder, salt, insofar as it is not purchased directly from the neighboring valley peoples, cowrie shells, buttons, cretonne, silk, small mirrors, thread, needles, and embroidery thread. Unfortunately, these traders also bring in fabrics whose importation is superfluous. Moreover, they sell the coveted magic articles and amulets and deal in children for adoption, or even women.

[435] The traders make a profit of several hundredfold, since, besides their not very pronounced commercial talent, the Meau lack the connection with the rest of the world needed for a proper evaluation of the worth of their wares.

[487] Business with the traders, who scrupulously seek out village after village, takes place during the dry season, since the mountain paths are impassable in the rainy season. A trade journey of the Haw therefore takes months. The wares desired by the Meau are carried by porters and pack animals up and down through the mountainous terrain and through the virgin forests. Barter, formerly the only type of trade, is still widely practiced. In the first place there is the raw opium of the Meau, and then stags' horns, the horns of the rhinoceros, and ivory. Rattan lianas, finished baskets, and field produce also serve as articles for barter, primarily the latter because the many porters of the traders need food.

436 Besides the traditional barter goods, a means of payment used today is a range of kinds of money, and, to be sure, from those countries that have been traversed by the Meau. For the most part, the coins in circulation are those which officially represent the currency of the country in which the Meau happen to be living. Thus, in Burmese territory rupees are principally used, in Thailand ticals, in Indochina piasters, on Chinese territory the current Chinese standard; interestingly enough, besides these kinds of money, Russian coins are said to have been in circulation among the Meau in former times.

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437 There are no articles that can only be bought with money
439 or with a specific barter commodity. If a person does not have
any /425/ silver, he is free to give opium, game, or field produce
in payment instead, just as he may buy silver, that is, coins,
by means of such articles (see the chapter, "Law and the Ad-
ministration of Justice," the section, "Property Law").

439 The Meau do not hold any markets of their own in northern
[443] Thailand and do not visit, in contrast to the Meau settled in
[184] Indochina, the markets of the Lao and Schan /Shan/ living in the
valleys. Occasionally, to be sure, Lao traders appear among
the Meau with their principal article of trade, salt, but usually
the Meau undertake the journey in order to acquire the precious
product from a Lao in the valley below or occasionally visit the
Yau /Yao/ villages in order to buy silver ornaments, since the
Yau enjoy a certain reputation as skilled silversmiths.

[184] As a result of closer contact with the Chinese and
Annamese, trade seems to be more highly developed among
439 the Meau in Indochina. Concerning this, Lajonquière (1)

1. II, p. 311.

writes: "They produce almost everything that is needed for their
subsistence, but without getting any other advantage from it."
Abadie (2), too, confirms this statement. Lajonquière con-

2. Page 161.

[273] tinues: "Nevertheless, a few distill alcohol from maize and
[325] sago for the valley dwellers. Others produce spades and plow-
[326] shares from the raw iron that they buy in the markets, and
[323] finally others make pottery. The manufacture of guns, which
was formerly current among them, is gradually disappearing
through the ease of importation."

AKha A04
Miao AE5

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- M
● 439 Besides the types of trade mentioned, there is among
439 the Meau in northern Thailand also barter to a limited extent
439 with the Phi Tong Luang, or Yumbri, as these proto-Mongoloid
forest nomads call themselves (see Bernatzik, IV (3)). The

3. Page 116.

Meau have provided them with plaiting, especially the very laboriously made rattan mats and solid standing-baskets (chapter, "Handicrafts," Fig. 327); in the barter trade one large pig is given for five of these mats or baskets a smaller one for one or two. For rattan, honey, wax, and sometimes also for firewood, usually field products, sometimes meat, worn clothing or knives, and less frequently spears, opium, or alcohol are given.

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439 In the trade of the Akha a few differences in comparison
[421] with that of the Meau result merely from the fact that the con-
[596] cept of personal property is drawn more narrowly than among the
Meau. Even among sib members the head of the family plays
the decisive role and must consent to every major trade trans-
action.

As among the Meau, among the Akha, too, everything to cover the needs of life is made within the family, although extras are obtained from the migratory traders, insofar as they cannot be acquired through closer trade connections with the valley peoples, primarily the Schan /Shan/. The latter hold markets at which the Akha sell opium, cotton, pepper, pigs, and forest products, such as honey /Ills. 73-79 appear here on unnumbered pages/ /427/ and the wax of wild bees, and the like, and in exchange buy salt, betel pepper, and in more recent times silver ornaments, for, next to the Lisu, the Akha are among the richest of the mountain tribes.

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[231] A principal article of trade of the Akha is raw cotton (Ill. 32)¹ in addition to which, in regions that are suitable for it, they breed buffaloes exclusively for sale to the Lao (see the chapter, "Means of Subsistence," the section, "Animal Husbandry"). Also, as among the Meau, the sturdy standing-baskets (see the chapter, "Handicrafts," Fig. 386) represent an important article of trade. Nevertheless, trade with the Lao, whose stores in the
¹ [see cat. 116, p 250 - ANALYST]
[Text continues on P. 577]